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NEWS
FROM YOUR MUSEUM

Know your Museum better

THE ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

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Attention Duck Hunters!

Bang! Bang!! The duck season opens this month. On the fifteenth of September in the chilly hours before sunrise, an army will take to the field. It will be composed of rotund, not-so-tired business men, uniformed in durable jackets, breeches and rubber boots; brown-faced farm boys, wearing whatever is handy; doctors, mechanics, store-keepers all eager recruits in the sport of duck hunting. All this will take place north of a line running through southern Ontario in the vicinity of Lake Simcoe. South of that line the hunters will have to wait until October 1.

Black Ducks will be the principal quarry. These will be locally reared birds and perhaps a few from the north. Ducks from the west will not have arrived as yet. From the west? Yes, most of the ducks prized by the sportsman are reared in the prairie provinces.

Perhaps you thought ducks like other birds fly north in the spring and south in the autumn. In general they do but ducks are among the irregulars. The Baldpate, Green-winged Teal, Redhead, Canvasback and others are mostly hatched in the sloughs of the prairie. In the autumn they start southward and then many of them turn east through Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan to southern Ontario. From here they fly southeast to winter in the marshes of the Carolina coast. But what about the ducks raised on our countless lakes in northern Ontario? Ornithologists of the Royal Ontario Museum,for the past eighteen years, have been surveying the bird life of Ontario, from Hudson Bay to Lake Erie, and they have found that the clear, deep, cold lakes of our north are the breeding grounds of very few ducks. They explain that most of our lakes are, simply,basins in the hard Precambrian rocks. These rocks break down into soil so slowly that nice, muddy duck-ponds have not been developed. Perhaps in a million years we may raise more wild ducks in northern Ontario--if our ducks last that long. Sportsmen, remember the bag limit,respect the game laws,and be thankful for the prairie provinces.

THE AMMONITES

If you are thinking of the biblical tribe that frequently warred with the Jews you are mistaken. They are fossil shellfish of the same name we mean. These were animals with coiled shells resembling the twisted horns of a ram or like those of the sun god Ammon whom the ancient Egyptians worshipped. They lived in great numbers in the seas over 50,000,000 years ago at the same time the dinosaurs roamed the lands. Their fossilized shells, which vary from the size of a coin to that of a cart wheel, may be seen among the splendid collections of the Royal Ontario Museum. The devil-fish of today are their descendants.

Loaned by His Majesty the King

Through the kindness of his Gracious Majesty King George, there are on display in the Royal Ontario Museum some amazing examples of brass casting. There are also six beautiful caskets of gold, silver, and ivory which were the elaborate receptacles of addresses presented on special great occasions by various communities of India to King George V, King Edward VII, and Queen Victoria.

When such presents were to be given there was a kind of contest, and a city or district would show what its workmen could do in the way of great craftsmanship. The material used is intrinsically valuable, but thin,and the whole object is to show what their craftsmen can do; in no sense is it a gift of a pound, or so many pounds, of silver.

We are particularly grateful for this loan, as it shows the workmanship of the different districts of India. Many Canadians knew that the brass casters of Nepal were very wonderful, but few grasped that they could cast such lace-work in this terribly difficult substance as may be seen in the great temple lamps. To our own people who are actively engaged in casting, the skill must appear to be staggering.

Then again, in the sheet metal work, in the repousse´ work, there is a quality of workmanship we can well admire. An interesting thing is that with all the Indian real love of precious stones, only the Madras cabinet uses them. To a country like ours,where craftsmanship is so tremendously needed if we are to build wisely and well,this collection is of very great value.

DO YOU KNOW

that the Museum successfully organizes a day's visit for out-of-town groups, arranging for lunches, moving pictures,and gallery demonstrations for their entertainment?

that these visits may be adapted to any length of time and to any group ranging in numbers from 10 to 400?

that 99 groups from the province consisting of 5,678 boys and girls availed themselves of this opportunity in 1940?

that once you have come you will want to return the next year?

that now is the time to make your plans? Write to us for further particulars.

TO OUT-OF-TOWN VISITORS

When in the city for the Canadian National Exhibition this autumn visit also the Royal Ontario Museum. Have tea at the Museum's up-to-date tea room which is open every afternoon except Monday from 3 to 5 o'clock.